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# The Soil Beneath the Encampments: How Israel and Jews Became the Focus of Hate at Harvard

by the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA)

May 2024



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# The Soil Beneath the Encampments

## *How Israel and Jews Became the Focus of Hate at Harvard*

### A Report by the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA) May 2024

*“Harvard signals that Jews are only acceptable so long as they don’t fully embrace Judaism and choose to practice their religion. The second half of the year taught me that the only hope of surviving Harvard as a Jew was to not dress “too Jewish,” request the university accommodate Jewish holidays, speak Hebrew, or, God forbid, actually support Israel’s right to exist.”*

*- Anonymous former student*

*“I can hear the protesters chanting “globalize the intifada” in the morning from my bed... Students can call zionists blood-thirsty vipers, and that’s okay... We keep meeting with the Administration, and nothing happens. They are not enforcing their time, place, and manner restrictions. These students are getting a pass which leads me to wonder:*

*what’s going to happen next year?”*

*– Charlie Covit, Freshman*

## Executive Summary

### Background on the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA) and Report

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, as the terrorist attack on Israel that murdered 1,200 people was still ongoing, more than 30 Harvard student groups signed a statement that “h[e]ld the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.” In the following weeks, many Harvard students rallied in support of a genocidal terrorist group that had just committed crimes against humanity while simultaneously condemning Israel as a racist, apartheid, and genocidal state worthy of elimination.

**This paradox was a wake-up call:**

**Something was profoundly wrong at our beloved alma mater.**

**Hence, the [Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance](#) was formed. We now have 3,000 members.**

Shortly after HJAA launched, a small group of HJAA members—none of whom knew each other in advance—came together to research the day-to-day experiences of Jewish and Israeli Harvard students and to examine and explore the root causes of the hatred on display.

To do that, we—professionals in the fields of education, executive search, literature, medicine, social work, and software development—had extensive conversations with 50 current and former Jewish students and faculty members about their experiences at Harvard, both inside and outside the classroom. These discussions mainly took place between November 2023 and February 2024.

At the same time, seven HJAA members studied Harvard's educational program. Although we had limited access, we examined course catalogs for the past two school years, school and department websites, event calendars, the offerings of various centers and programs, and selected syllabi.

**While considerable focus in the media has been on student-generated anti-Semitism, we wanted to explore if and how Harvard as an institution - its faculty and educational programs - might be fueling the hatred we were witnessing.**

This report is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive. That would require full access to classrooms and a year, if not more, of effort. However, as the crisis at Harvard has been unfolding rapidly, we felt the imperative to release our findings—not as a final document, but to spur more research and action to counter the degradation of standards and alleviate the pain felt by too many.

**What we found was worse than we had anticipated.**

## **Main Findings**

**Harvard Has Been a Hostile Environment for Many Jewish Students, Including in the Classroom Since and Before October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Through conversations with 42 Jewish students, we learned that they had been systematically targeted and excluded *not only by other students but also within classrooms and by professors*. Every student we interviewed, except one, discussed feeling alienated and excluded, if not outright harassed.**

While we realize that 42 students may seem like a small sample (roughly 6% of the Jewish population at Harvard), it is nonetheless informative that their feelings were so similar. We recognize not every Jewish student is affected. As a former student stated, "It is ok to be Jewish, but any student who is 'too Jewish' suffers." "Too Jewish," she explained, means showing any external sign of being Jewish or expressing support for Israel. (Student A)

What follows are some of the remarks from students, starting with their experiences in the classroom. All the students except for two insisted on anonymity because they feared academic, social, and even physical retribution if their identity became known. In fact, those students insisted we scrub any information that might even potentially identify them.

- "[The professor] said, 'Where are you from?' I said, 'Israel.' He looked at me and said ... 'I need to ask you to leave the class.' No other visiting student was asked to leave." Kim Nahari, Sophomore
- "I attempted to attend the History department's Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space." (Student B)
- "[T]here's a big class on the Holocaust that's like a general education class, so it's not just for people in a major. My friend took this class, and there was a teaching fellow who ... was



saying things like it really wasn't that bad. And look at all the ways that Jews contributed to the Holocaust happening.” (Student C)

- “I took a class in the Spring of '23 called *Religion, Nationalism and Settler Colonialism* [at Harvard Divinity School].... The class was just a 12-week hate fest.” (Student D)
- “On October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Religion and Public Life department [of the Divinity School] released their statement trying to contextualize and rationalize the violence.... The professor offered no apologies. She is inviting a Palestinian speaker next week who publicly said that Israel made up the stories about babies being beheaded and women being raped.” (Student D)
- “Almost everybody I know, including myself, does not represent their true attitudes in the classroom.” (Student E)
- A faculty member echoed this student: “It’s indoctrination, not education. The last place you will have a free, interesting discussion is a Harvard classroom.” (Faculty A)

**Jewish students also were harassed, bullied, and excluded by other students well before October 7<sup>th</sup>. Since then, it just got louder, prouder, and more visible.**

- “It’s so much harder for the students who are visibly Jewish. I have a friend who wears a kippah who was physically cornered by a group of students demanding he denounce the so-called genocide.” - Charlie Covit, Freshman
- “Last year, I had a mezuzah outside my dorm, which was taken down.” (Student F)
- “Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian.... [My Israeli friend] was called a war criminal.” (Student G)
- “‘A Zionist state cannot happen without apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and colonialism.’ That was on the wall during apartheid week. And they get people to believe them.” (Student G)
- “No other group gets compared to the Nazis... Because of my Jewish and Zionist identity, people think I am a monster. I have heard people say, ‘Zionists should be slain.’” (Student H)
- “All the ... [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.” (Student I)
- “They use the word Zionist so they can say that they’re not antisemites....” (Student J)

**Jewish students feared for their safety.**

- “They are saying, ‘I am scared to be a Jew here right now.’” (Student E reporting on the sentiment of fellow Jewish students.)
- “This felt to me like they wanted dead Jews.” (Student H)
- “All the protests are right outside Mass Hall.... There were days I was afraid to leave my room.” (Student I)

### **Harvard, Through its Curriculum and Faculty, Planted and Spread the Seeds of Hate Well Before October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Our research found that when student protesters rally for Hamas as freedom fighters and lob at Israel labels that represent the world’s worst evils, they are repeating what they are taught in classrooms and at department-sponsored events.**

**It begins with a distorted, often inaccurate recurring narrative—practically a script—taught across departments, courses, events, and faculty advocacy. That narrative**

promotes the view that Israel—a tiny country with half of the world’s Jewish population—is the last remaining colonial settler power embodying the world’s worst evils: racism, apartheid, and genocide. The narrative promotes the view that the Palestinian people are innocent victims of Jewish (white) oppression and that known terrorist groups are simply [“political movements.”](#)

**Many Harvard programs and departments, in all or part, promulgate this narrative.**

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is out in front, followed by the School of Public Health and the Divinity School. Faculty promoting this narrative also span the departments of Anthropology, African American Studies, English, Ethnicity, Migration and Rights, Government, History, Music, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Social Studies, Sociology, Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, and Visual Arts, as well as Harvard’s Kennedy School, Law School, Medical School, Carr Center for Human Rights, the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, and the Weatherhead Institute of International Affairs

**In 2022-23, Harvard held at least 20 events that spread the virulently anti-Israel narrative.**

Examples include:

- Jerusalem: Examining Settler Colonialism and Undoing Colonial Knowledge Production
- Settler Colonialism, Structural Racism and the Palestinian Right to Health
- Palestine Trek: Bearing Witness to Apartheid, Military Occupation, and Settler-Colonialism
- Colonial Cartography in Palestine-Israel and the Decolonising Potential of Counter-Maps

In January 2024, [112 faculty joined the new Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine \(FJP\)](#). Under the umbrella of [the US Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel \(USACBI\)](#), this new faculty group calls for a boycott of Israel and all companies that “sustain Israeli apartheid, settler colonialism, and systematic human rights.”

Faculty have the right to voice their opinions and sign documents as individuals. They don’t have the right to [post an indisputably anti-Semitic cartoon](#), as FJP did in February 2024. While that cartoon was taken down after being criticized, those responsible were never penalized, and the group put an equally offensive post in its place. In protests and the recent encampments, FJP’s faculty and staff have linked arms with Harvard’s version of Students for Justice Palestine to drive the anti-Israel narrative and - intended or not - the subsequent hostility to Jews on campus.

**Partnerships and visiting speakers and professors magnify false narratives and hate.**

- The School of Public Health partners with the terrorist-supporting **Birzeit University** in the West Bank. Birzeit [prohibits Israeli Jews from campus](#), [hosts military parades for Hamas](#), and posted “[Glory for Martyrs](#)” three days after October 7<sup>th</sup>. Harvard students can take a three-week course at BIRZEIT.
- In 2022-23, Harvard hosted Emad Shahin, CMES Shawwaf Visiting Professor, who taught five classes on the modern Middle East, including [Jihad, War and Peace in Islamic Law and Practice](#). (Previously, Shahin had been convicted in absentia of "conspiring with foreign armed groups, including Hamas and the Lebanese group Hezbollah," to destabilize Egypt.) Shahin’s course describes terrorist groups as “contemporary political movements.” A cursory

look found this excerpt from the required reading: “[T]he suicide bomber belongs in an important sense to a liberal tradition of armed conflict.”

- Harvard opens its classrooms and event spaces to a steady stream of speakers and fellows with a paper trail of unchecked anti-Semitism. The views of these speakers include:
  - “Fascists. Terrorists. Colonizers. There is no morally defensible argument for supporting Zionism. [It’s blood-thirsty and violent.](#)”
  - “It’s also a historical fact that [American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure](#) in this country....We know that from the data.”
  - “[Israel tests its weapons on Palestinian children.](#)”
  - “[What happened on 10/7? The burnt bodies were Hamas militants](#) & now we learn Israeli helicopter fire may have killed ravers!”

In rejecting this narrative, one student noted: “In terms of our education... people don’t understand what Zionism is. They think it’s white settler colonialism. People need to understand the history, not just the Holocaust, but of the Jewish people and why it’s so important for there to be a Jewish state.” (Student E) But many students, Jewish and otherwise, don’t know this information—and they aren’t going to learn it at Harvard. When Harvard’s instructors make Israel the world’s worst oppressor while omitting facts disputing their claims, students, understandably, believe the one-sided narrative.

**Our review found only a few faculty and programs offering a more balanced or alternative perspective on the Hamas/Israel war or the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.** We found a few at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and some (largely before October 7<sup>th</sup>) at the Law School. An independent auditor will need to find if there is a critical mass of other examples.

**The Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) seems to prefer looking away.** In 2023-24, only one of its 40 courses (besides Hebrew courses) even partially focused on Israel. Between October 7, 2023 and April 2024, only three of CJS’ [34 events](#) were on the Israel-Hamas war or the crisis facing Jews worldwide.

### **The Social Media Platform Exclusively Used By Harvard Students is Replete with Unchecked Anti-Semitism**

This year, Sidechat, Harvard’s anonymous social media platform requiring a Harvard email address to log on, included posts like:

- “Gas the Jews”
- “stfu pedo lover! All of you Zionists are the same. Killers and rapists of children.”
- “Pro-genocide soph0more... looks just as dumb as her nose is crooked.”

Posts like these spurred Harvard, in January 2024, to ask Sidechat to better moderate content and restrict access only to undergraduates. After that, un-coded Jew hate perhaps tamped down some. There still is plenty of “life would be better if Zionism did not exist” and “Zionist Nazis.”

## Harvard's Administration Continues to Be Unresponsive to Most Attacks on Jewish Students

The Administration has repeatedly ignored Jewish students' complaints despite clear violations of Harvard's [non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies](#). There have been few to no consequences for the perpetrators of hate speech and bullying. And now we have learned [there will be no consequences for those students, faculty, and staff in the protests and encampments](#) who have made Jews feel physically unsafe, disrupted and imperiled the wider Harvard community, and broken Harvard's own code of conduct.

As one student told us, "The double standard of the Harvard administration is very jarring. A gay law school student was assaulted by another law school student. An email went out to every student at the law school the same day saying that they were suspending the person. It has been three weeks since the assault [of a Jewish student at Harvard Business School], and only one of the people has been removed from an official Harvard position [but not suspended]."

As Freshman Charlie Covit observed: "There have been so many meetings, but nothing has happened....Why can you scream 'globalize the intifada' outside my dorm room, and there is no punishment? What's going to happen next year when they are choosing not to enforce their rules now?"

The Israeli student who was kicked out of a class for being Israeli said, "First, I reached out to Hillel, and I asked them what I should do. They told me to file a complaint through the DEI [office]. I had a conversation with my Resident Dean and Dean Khurana.... Everyone said, 'Hey, I hear you.' But, there was no follow-up."

We, too, never received a response to an earlier draft of this report, which we shared with Interim President Alan Garber, Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana, and Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick on January 22, 2024. President Garber said he wanted to share the report with his Task Force on Antisemitism. In April 2024, the Task Force's co-chair, Professor Derek Penslar, said he never got a copy.

## In Conclusion

In presenting this report, HJAA has no intention of stifling free speech or academic freedom. Our objective is to advocate for (as is stated in Harvard's own code of conduct) "a community that is open, welcoming, and inclusive and that supports all community members in pursuit of the University's mission of learning, teaching, research, and discovery." Harvard's mission also requires a safe learning and non-hostile work environment.

**We reject how the University is balancing free speech and academic freedom with Jewish students' rights to access an education free from harassment and hate.**

Harvard's double standard in applying its code of conduct is the basis for HJAA's first stated request: that the Administration and Corporation "take swift, concrete and public action to enforce the



University's codes of conduct *uniformly and without exception*, and discipline students, faculty and staff who violate them." A complete list of HJAA objectives is at the end of the report.

We prepared this report to help repair, restore, and strengthen Harvard. We hope it spurs further bipartisan—that is, nonpartisan—investigations at #Harvard and other educational institutions.

###

## PART I: Jewish Students in Their Own Words

### Harvard Has Been a Hostile Environment For Many Jewish Students, Including in the Classroom, Before October 7<sup>th</sup>.

We felt compelled to listen to students because no one else was. Between mid-October 2023 and February 2024, one intrepid HJAA leader interviewed 22 current or former Harvard students and six Harvard faculty members. Four other HJAA members had conversations with roughly 20 other students. We also spoke with four additional faculty members. Most of the students we interviewed were not Israeli students.

We conducted our education audit at arm's length, but Harvard's Israeli and Jewish students shared their experiences in their own words. Their testimonials capture the bullying, harassment, exclusion, and even outright hate students face throughout their lives at Harvard.

**Through these discussions, we learned that Jewish students had been systematically targeted and excluded *not only by other students - which we expected to find based on early media coverage – but also within classrooms and by professors*. Every student we interviewed discussed feeling alienated and excluded if not outright harassed.**

There are two points to make before turning to the testimonials. First, when we spoke to students about sharing their testimonies, many started retracting their statements or insisting on anonymity (including that we scrub from their testimonies all possible identifying information). They had come to an understandable conclusion: *We've been asking for help from the administration for months to no avail; why should this time be different? And therefore, why should I open myself up to academic, social, and even physical retribution?* On a university campus, this fear is alarming.

The faculty members were even more afraid of speaking with us on the record; they worried it could get them fired or undermine a promotion. At Harvard, in the 21st century.

***The faculty members were even more afraid of speaking with us on the record; they said it could get them fired or undermine a promotion.***

Second, we do not claim that every Jewish student is affected. For, as one student clarified for us, “It’s ok to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish.’” She went on to explain, “The only hope of surviving Harvard as a Jew was to not dress “too Jewish,” request the university accommodate Jewish holidays, speak Hebrew, or God forbid, actually support Israel’s right to exist.”

As more recent theoretical frameworks recycle anti-Semitic tropes to cast all Jews as the worst of “white” oppressors, many more Jewish students are caught in the crosshairs. As another student told us, “The pro-Palestinians see Israel as the white colonizer oppressor. It’s the same thing they say about ‘the white Jews: They bought their way into the school, they have money, they have connections. It’s the same mindset.’”

*“It’s okay to be Jewish at Harvard, as long as you aren’t ‘too Jewish.’” The only hope of surviving Harvard as a Jew was to not dress “too Jewish,” request the university accommodate Jewish holidays, speak Hebrew, or God forbid, actually support Israel’s right to exist.”*

## 1. It Starts in the Classroom Where Faculty and Teaching Fellows (TFs) Don’t Hide Their Extreme Bias and Hostility.

Students see the bias in the differential treatment of students, faculty statements, and class cancellations.

- “I am taking a class with Professor Penslar, *Modern Jewish History*. Penslar signed the letter ... [that] calls Israel an apartheid state .... What I have been surprised by in the class is one of the TFs is vehemently anti-Israel, showing only one side.” (“TFs” or teaching fellows are often called “teaching assistants” at other universities)”
- “I took a class in the Spring of '23 called *Religion, Nationalism and Settler Colonialism* [at Harvard Divinity School]....The class was just a 12-week hate fest.... One of the classes was titled ‘The Holocaust and Ongoing Nakba.’ It was just a way to compare the treatment of Palestinians to the way Jews were treated during the Holocaust.”
- “[T]here’s a big class on the Holocaust that’s like a general education class, so it’s not just for people in a major. My friend took this class, and there was a teaching fellow who ... was saying things like it really wasn’t that bad. And look at all the ways that Jews contributed to the Holocaust happening.”

- “[In March 2023] I joined one of my best friends for her Middle Eastern class because she was presenting and invited me to watch her presentation. [There were about] 30 students [in the class], and there were other people in the class who were [also] coming to see their friends present. In the middle of the class, the professor stopped the lecture .... He asked me if I was a student [in his class], and I said, ‘No, my friend invited me to watch her present.’ Then he said, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘Israel.’ He looked at me and said ... ‘I need to ask you to leave the class’.... People are uncomfortable because I am from Israel. This means that he had to ask [only] me to leave a class where others were also ... there to listen to their friends....”

*“Then [the professor] said, ‘Where are you from?’ I said, ‘Israel.’ He looked at me and said ... ‘I need to ask you to leave the class....’”*

- “On October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Religion and Public Life department [of the Divinity School] released their statement trying to contextualize and rationalize the violence. Saying there are two sides. This was so horrible that the interim dean had to come the next day and say it was so horrible, and it only reflects the views of those who signed it. The professor offered no apologies. She is inviting a Palestinian speaker next week who publicly said that Israel made up the stories about babies being beheaded and women being raped.”
- “Post-October 7<sup>th</sup>, there was a really unsettling section.... It was mostly an effort to contextualize why Hamas' actions were justified.”
- “I can tell you right now that I'm currently in a class on Ottoman history taught by Professor Cemal Kafadar.... I've basically stopped going. I mean, Professor Kafadar also signed that letter and has been pretty vocal, and the TF has told us all to go to these teach-ins [e.g., Evolving War in Israel/Palestine, a teach-in sponsored by CMES].
- “One of the TFs canceled class to go protest with the Palestinian Solidarity Committee.”

*“One of the TFs canceled class to go protest with the Palestinian Solidarity Committee.”*

- “Literally three days ago, [during the] EC 10 lecture [large introductory economics course].. there was a walkout.... [PSC supporters] used EC 10 as the central location to begin this rally. These people were not students of the class and walked into the class with their own agenda [and] with megaphones. ‘If you support us, free Palestine, come walk with us.’ About five people stood up and walked out. The professor... afterward... said, ‘If anyone feels that they need to leave, this class is being recorded.’”

### Sometimes, Faculty Anti-Semitism is Blatant

- In 2023, after students filed a complaint, Harvard [conceded](#) that a Kennedy School Lecturer intentionally discriminated against three Israeli students in his class.
- In January 2024, the first visible action of the newly formed [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) was to [create an Instagram post with a horrific antisemitic picture](#). While that cartoon was taken down after being criticized, the group put another offensive post in its place. Harvard rebuked the faculty and removed a professor from his role as the advisor of Harvard's student pro-Palestine group, Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC). No other consequences ensued.

## 2. The Lack of Viewpoint Diversity and Debate Seeds Hate

**The absence of viewpoint diversity and debate enables false and inflammatory labels to be weaponized in and outside the classroom.**

- “Jewish history is routinely pushed under the rug.”
- “In terms of our education, that is the most important thing. People don't understand what Zionism is. They think it's white settler colonialism. People need to understand the history, not just the Holocaust, but of the Jewish people and why it's so important for there to be a Jewish state.”
- “[S]uch a significant percentage of the student body think Israel is a colonialist apartheid state.”
- Obviously, we're talking about Jews and Muslims in this time in this place. Muslims colonized ... and imprisoned all the Jews there and murdered a bunch of people, and we're just glossing over that part....”

## 3. Jewish Students Lack Full Academic Access

**Israeli and Jewish students also don't have full academic access to Harvard. They avoid certain classes and majors because of the hostilities they would face, don't participate in class discussions for fear of academic retribution, and are excluded by those who hope to fill events and lecture halls with like-minded peers.**



- “My older sister went to Harvard. She took a Middle East politics course. When she expressed her opinions on Israel [in her assignments], her grade would suffer. She had a terrible experience. Because of her experience, I never wanted to take a class about Middle East politics.”
- “When I came to Harvard, I really wanted to study Middle Eastern studies. I took a class in the Middle East department, and I wanted to take more, and both [my brother] and his boyfriend said, “You can't concentrate on Middle Eastern studies, you will suffer.”

*“You can't concentrate on Middle Eastern studies, you will suffer.”*

- “Israelis are not in these Middle Eastern studies classes. There were lots of times I felt weird and uncomfortable saying I was from Israel in my section when I took a Middle Eastern Studies class. That is the only reason why I'm *not* pursuing [Middle Eastern studies] as my concentration.”
- “[I am] dropping my NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations] department class because it's a hostile environment for me.”
- “I haven't challenged my TF, I don't feel comfortable. I'm not going to change my TF's opinion. It's not worth it. The section is a small class. The way the grading in the classes works, it is so heavily dependent on participation that it leaves room for interpretation....
- I don't make arguments that the TFs disagree with because they don't seem to grade based on the validity of the argument.”

**Jewish students who attend one-sided events can be marginalized and publicly ridiculed—or even blocked from entry.**

*“I attempted to attend the History department's Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space.”*

- “I attempted to attend the History department's Palestine event but was turned away by an organizer who recognized me, despite my having registered, with him giving the excuse of a lack of space.” [The organizer continued allowing other students to enter.]
- “Last year, the PSC invited Mohammed el-Kurd to speak. I decided that I was going to listen to him because we have free speech and I wanted to hear what he had to say. I decided to

ask a question of him: ‘Mr el-Kurd, do you condemn the killing of innocent Israeli, Jews, American civilians across the world as a form of resistance and liberation?’ He said, ‘I’m not going to dignify that racist question with a response.’ 200 of my fellow peers were clapping for him.”

- “I attended this Mohammed el-Kurd event last year. A few days later, this proctor [resident advisor] came up to me at Annenberg and said, ‘You had a really interesting question. I’d love to find time to chat with you.’ He said, ‘Let’s grab a meal next week.’ And I said, ‘Okay.’ I have never heard someone praise terrorists like he did. He’s a proctor, so you say yes when he asks you for lunch. I thought he was an authority figure.... I had a crazy conversation with him over lunch. I just remember the trauma of that conversation. It made me realize for the first time that there are some people who truly are so crazed in their beliefs that freedom fighters are the solution to a problem. That really jarred me.”

*“I have never heard someone praise terrorists like he did.... I thought he was an authority figure.... I just remember the trauma of that conversation.”*

#### 4. Hostility and Exclusion Also Pervaded Students’ Lives Outside the Classroom Before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Students told us it starts during Convocation and the First-Year International Program (“FIP”), before students enter their first class as freshmen. And it permeates every aspect of their supposed new home: where they study, sleep, eat, and socialize. Sometimes, it’s harassment. Sometimes, it’s pure hate. To be clear, while Israeli students still face the most abuse (i.e., they are called “murderers” to their face), the isolation, harassment, and hostility extend far beyond them.

##### Before Day 1 of Class

*“From day one at the First Year International Program, people heard that I was from Israel, and some people stopped talking to me, including some of the leaders [of the orientation program].”*

- “Convocation freshman year is the first week. My entire convocation was corrupted—hijacked by the PSC [Palestine Solidarity Committee].... At convocation, I felt like these people really, really don’t want me here. They want me to feel unwelcome. My

being a Zionist and a Jew is contrary to their values, and they will use inflammatory rhetoric and tactics that are intentionally designed to hurt me.”

- “[At] my very first experience at Harvard, there was an anti-Israel protest at our convocation. The head of FIP was very unkind to me. He didn't say anything, but he treated me differently from other people. Then I saw him demonstrating during convocation, and then I was like, ‘Oh, it makes sense.’”
- ‘From day one at the First Year International Program, people heard that I was from Israel, and some people stopped talking to me, including some of the leaders [of the orientation program]. There is an ice breaker event where you divide up by country, and it's known among the Israelis to stay in your room or go [join the] Europe [group]. That is from Day 1 [at Harvard].’
- “I remember that [at the] First Year International Program during pre-orientation ... one specific student turned around and left after I answered that I was from Israel. I see her a lot. That was an unforgettable moment.”

*“My being a Zionist and a Jew is contrary to their values, and they will use inflammatory rhetoric and tactics that are intentionally designed to hurt me.”*

#### **What Israeli and Jewish students see when they walk around their campus home**

- “Last year during apartheid week, I had to walk by a wall with an image comparing Israel to the Nazis with an image of cattle cars going into a gate. I was appalled that there would be Nazi comparisons; no other groups get compared to the Nazis. I ended up switching my walk to class so I could avoid walking by the wall.”
- “‘A Zionist state cannot happen without apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and colonialism.’ They had that on the wall during apartheid week. And they get people to believe them. People know and understand racism, apartheid, and colonialism, and [the PSC have used those words] to get them to believe [that they are true about Israel].”
- “[They] have managed to put the Palestinian context within a very American context using language like white supremacy etc. [They are] great at [creating their own] narrative.”

#### **Where they sleep and eat and with whom they socialize**

- “Last year I had a mezuzah outside my dorm, and that was taken down.”

- “Someone carved a swastika on the bulletin board at Currier House. It was in 2022, around the time of apartheid week and The Crimson BDS movement.”
- “What I find most distressing, and what influences my happiness most, is that when I walk into the house dining hall, and I say, ‘hi,’ people won’t say hi back just because I was born in Israel and served in the Israeli military. That goes a long way with [affecting] your feeling of belonging.”
- “You can’t eat in Adams, literally. I ate there once and I was like, ‘I am never going back there.’ They all know what Israelis look like. They actively stare at us.... [They] know I’m Israeli and hate me for it. Some of them stop talking when I walk near them. Someone from my NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations] department class looks away when she sees me.”
- “This one girl who wasn’t in our blocking group but also was invited [to the Dominican Republic] wouldn’t come because I was going. I am Israeli, and she didn’t want to be pictured with someone who is Israeli. She wasn’t shy [about it], she was public about it....”

#### **And what student organizations and causes they can join**

- “It’s what happens when Black Lives Matter, which everyone agrees with and supports, says that in order to support this cause, you also have to support the Palestinian cause. It’s that. And then on campus where it’s like everything is advocacy, everything is social movements that I actually care a lot about, but then I get excluded from these spaces.”
- One of my best friends is one year older and invited me to the first [PSK punch] event. The punch master is from Egypt and told his friends that I can’t come because I don’t adhere to PSK values because I served in the IDF beyond the mandatory requirement. I tried to talk to him [the Egyptian co-punchmaster] and he won’t even exchange a word with me. The PSK kids said, “it was your decision to stay in the IDF post your mandatory term.”

## **5. The Jew Hate Became Louder, Prouder, and Visible to the World**

We conducted our interviews from mid-October 2023 to February 2024, during the period when there were constant anti-Israel, pro-Hamas protests but before the encampments had yet to take over the Yard (which occurred in April.)

#### **“They want dead Jews”—the psychological effects of the ongoing protests.**

- “As a first year, we’re based in Harvard Yard, and most of what is going on takes place there. Even if I didn’t want to involve myself, I can’t avoid it. If I want to go to Widener [the main

campus library], there are times that I can't go because there is a stampede of people on the steps. Hard to avoid because of where we're located.”

- “Today they were screaming, ‘There is only one solution, Intifada revolution.’ And saying ‘Globalize the intifada....’ One of the most crazy things I have seen - this is the first time I heard people say something that felt to me that they want dead Jews.”
- “Two days after I came back to campus [from being home in Israel], I saw a protest [being] led by the PSC in Harvard Yard. There was a huge sign that said, ‘Stop the Genocide in Gaza.’ I was just back to campus [having gone] to the funeral of my best friend who was brutally murdered by Hamas terrorists at the Nova music festival. And I just got emotional seeing such provocative and hateful signs.”
- “I have this flight or fight reaction when waking up in the morning and hearing the protestors chanting. I can't always tell what they're chanting, but I always feel that fear, feel triggered, and I [don't want to] walk through them to find out what they're saying.”

*“[T]his is the first time I heard people say something that felt to me that they want dead Jews.”*

#### **The harassment and hate ramped up.**

*“Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian....”*

- “We all knew people who were just murdered. And to see this [statement with all the student groups], [on October 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>], we couldn't believe it. We know people at these organizations, we are in classes with them. It didn't make sense [to us]. It was an extreme way of exposing what people think. It was disgusting for us.... We couldn't take the space to mourn.”
- “Someone I know was studying in [xxx] library. He couldn't focus because he was sitting next to ~15 people in Keffiyehs who wanted to write an op-ed in support of that proctor who had been let go. My friend didn't want to stick around and study for the math exam. They had severely skewed what had happened, and how they were presenting it wasn't even rooted in fact. It was just a mishmash of claims that the proctor had made. They said there were no complaints against the proctor, but that's not true, there were at least three complaints.”



- “Someone living in my [house] is friends with some other Israelis. At some point, [my friend] told me that this girl was talking to someone on my floor, and the girl on my floor said [that] I ‘murdered people....’ This girl on my floor asked this person I don't know well (but we're now friends) if she knew me and then said, ‘Did you know she was in the IDF, and therefore she murdered people.’”
- “They see [Israelis] as murderers.... People are actively telling people to not be friends with [Israelis]. Israelis are the only people where their nationality is held against them. Doesn't happen to my friend who is Russian.... [My Israeli friend] was called a war criminal.”
- “We all knew people who were just murdered. And to see this [statement with all the student groups], [on October 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup>], we couldn't believe it. We know people at these organizations, we are in classes with them. It didn't make sense [to us]. It was an extreme way of exposing what people think. It was disgusting for us.... We couldn't take the space to mourn.”
- “[Students on campus] are saying we're lying.... How am I supposed to be in class with someone who posted the day before that they are supportive of the murder and rape of my people? I could've been that person.”

#### **Jewish students feared for their physical safety.**

*“It's pretty scary to walk around campus.... And I'll tell you that he and pretty much all the other [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.”*

- “I'm engaged and my fiancé [who wears a kippah] was walking on campus on October 9<sup>th</sup>, and someone who [my fiancé] believed to be another student came up to him and spit in his face, oh my God, just on campus... I'll tell you that he and pretty much all the other [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.”
- “I am scared to be a Jew here right now.”
- “I think I feel more safe in Israel than here. I just think everyone knows my identity, and the only thing that protects me from people hurting Israelis is that they have too much to lose because they are Harvard students.”
- It's pretty scary to walk around campus knowing someone who is comfortable physically assaulting a religious Jew is potentially still on campus.... And I'll tell you that he and pretty much all the other [orthodox] guys on campus have started wearing baseball caps.

- “I felt very afraid even walking to Annenberg because, outside the science center, there would be protests or people asking me a question you can't say no to - like, ‘Did you condemn the murder of Palestinian children?’”
- “All the protests are right outside Mass Hall. A lot of the time, they are on the side where the dorm entrance is. There were days I was afraid to leave my room because there were people outside chanting, ‘End the occupation’ and ‘globalize the intifada.’”
- “It's scary to walk through the protest. I usually walk through the back doors [or the] side entrances at [the] science center.”
- “Since October 7<sup>th</sup>, there are certain things [I] notice that I didn't notice before. There is a police car constantly parked in front of Hillel. [It makes you think], are we in a state of danger if they have to place that kind of protection outside?”

**Students understand that “Zionist is a code word for Jew.”**

- “They use the word Zionist so they can say that they’re not antisemites....”
- “Because of my Jewish and Zionist identity, people think I am a monster. I have heard people say, ‘Zionists should be slain.’ I have heard people say, ‘You can’t possibly believe an Israeli, they are all settlers.’”
- “It's very clear at HDS [Harvard Divinity School] that Zionism is a very dirty, insulting word. To be called one is an insult. [It is] certainly not something you self-identify [as] publicly.”
- “What's disappointing is that they are smarter, and Zionist is a code word for Jew. You can't say Judaism is wrong, or the Jews control the media, but you can say ‘Zionists control the media. And that's what is so hard [because they use the word Zionist so they can say that they’re] not antisemites....”

## PART II: What the Education Has to Do with It

### Harvard, Through its Curriculum and Faculty, Planted and Spread the Seeds of Hate Well Before October 7<sup>th</sup>

#### 1. The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict Across Harvard Schools, Departments, and Programs

The educational focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is notable given the fact that Israel is [a tiny country](#) ([the size of New Jersey](#)) whose total population is 9 million, 7 million of whom are Jewish. Coverage of other world disputes and suffering appears to pale in comparison.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is out in front, followed by the Divinity School and the School of Public Health.

#### **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict saturates the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (“CMES”)**

- CMES doesn’t offer courses because it is not an academic department but sponsors dozens of events annually.
  - Last school year (2022-23), [close to 20% of CMES events](#) (10 of 56) addressed the Israeli/Palestinian conflict—the same number of CMES events on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt combined. During the same period, CMES held no events on the genocide in Sudan.
  - CMES gave equal focus to only one other topic: the Ottoman Empire (which lasted 600 years and spanned Southeast Europe, West Asia, and North Africa).
  - In 2015, the bloodiest year of the Syrian civil war when 110,000 people were killed, [CMES held only 3 Syrian-focused events](#).
  - From October 7, 2023 to April 2024, CMES sponsored 17 events on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, 25% of all of its events.
- After October 7<sup>th</sup>, CMES joined [a collaboration of other universities and Birzeit University](#) to organize fourteen “teach-in” sessions to put “Gaza in context.”
- CMES has announced that “Palestine” will be [one of its two themes](#) for its 2024 - 2025 visiting research program.
- CMES also has an office in Tunisia.

*In 2022-23, roughly 20% of CMES events focused on Israel and the Palestinian Territories—equal to the number of events on Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt combined.*

The School of Public Health has a program exclusively devoted to the Palestinians, the [Palestine Program for Health and Human Rights](#), in partnership with Birzeit University.

- This program offers the [Palestine Social Medicine Course](#), a three-week course at Birzeit University in the West Bank that [“introduces students to the social, structural, political, and historical aspects that determine Palestinian health.”](#)
- Birzeit University [prohibits Israeli Jews from campus, hosts military parades for Hamas](#) featuring children wearing mock explosive vests, names buildings and events after convicted terrorists involved in plotting attacks against Jewish civilians around the world, and posted [“Glory for martyrs”](#) three days after October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Another public health course, [“GHP 264: The Settler Colonial Determinants of Health,”](#) makes Palestine/Israel one of three case studies.
- The School of Public Health has also sponsored these events [here](#).

*Harvard has a partnership with a West Bank university, Birzeit, which prohibits Israeli Jews from campus, holds rallies honoring Hamas, and posts “Glory for martyrs” 3 days after October 7<sup>th</sup>.*

At Harvard Divinity School, the [Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative](#) (RCPI) appears to [focus entirely on the Palestinians](#). (RCPI is part of the [Religion and Public Life](#) Program.)

- Between 2019 and 2023, RCPI’s [fellowship program](#) brought roughly 23 fellows to Harvard, the vast majority of whom were engaged in projects related to the Palestinians.
- Divinity School courses include [Religion, Nationalism, and Settler Colonialism: the Case of Israel/Palestine](#) (HDS 3337) and [Learning in Context: Narratives of Displacement and Belonging in Israel/Palestine](#) (HDS 3335).
- HDS 3335 also offers a [trip to the West Bank and Gaza](#).

Harvard faculty members have also spearheaded and/or signed four anti-Israel university-wide statements/petitions since May 2021.

- [Statement by Harvard Faculty in Support of Palestinian Liberation](#), 80 faculty signers (May 2021).
- [Statement in Support of The Harvard Crimson and Palestinian Liberation](#), 49 signers (May 2022). This statement follows the Crimson's endorsement of BDS, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israel.
- [Faculty Open Letter to President Claudine Gay](#), 79 signers (October 19, 2023).
- [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) (FJP), 111 signers (posted initially with signatories in January 2024). Revised and reposted [here](#) on February 21, 2024). This faculty group is under [the US Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel \(USACBI\)](#).

Note that **this report does not challenge the rights of faculty members and others to voice their opinions and sign documents as individual scholars.** Understanding how faculty members joining this group bring their political views into their hiring decisions and course offerings is important. Moreover, when joining protests and then the encampments, faculty and staff have linked arms with Harvard's version of Students for Justice Palestine to drive the anti-Israel narrative and - intended or not - the subsequent hostility to Jews on campus.

While the above four statements have 174 independent signers, **a core group of roughly 47 Harvard faculty members takes the lead in driving the Palestinian-focused programs, courses, and events, writing in the popular press, helming trips to the Palestinian territories, creating and/or signing the petitions/statements, and [joining \(or leading\) protests](#).**

- 15 of the 47 faculty members are full professors, 10 are associate/assistant professors, 13 are lecturers, 2 are visiting professors, and 7 are instructors.<sup>1</sup>
- In addition to CMES, the Public Health School and the Divinity School, these faculty span the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Kennedy School, Law School, and Medical School. Other affiliations include the Carr Center for Human Rights, the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, and the Weatherhead Institute of International Affairs.
- FAS departments include the departments of Anthropology, African American Studies, English, Ethnicity, Migration and Rights, Government, History, Music, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Social Studies, Sociology, Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, and Visual Arts, Government, History, Sociology, Music, Visual Arts,

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<sup>1</sup> This number only includes Harvard faculty with clear teaching responsibilities. 35 of the 47 joined the new [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) in January 2024; 11 others aren't members of this new group but actively promote the narrative described in the next Section. We don't include the 14 teaching fellows who joined the Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine even though they, too, may be teaching students.



## 2. The Narrative: Israel as the Embodiment of the World's Worst Evils

**When Harvard's protesters rally for Hamas as freedom fighters and lob at Israel labels that represent the worst evils, they are repeating what they are being taught in classrooms and at campus events.**

It begins with a distorted, often inaccurate, recurring narrative, practically a script, taught across departments, courses, events, and faculty advocacy. That narrative promotes the view that Israel—a tiny country with half of the world's Jewish population—is the last remaining colonial settler power embodying the world's worst evils: racism, apartheid, and genocide. The narrative presents the Palestinian people as innocent victims of Jewish (white) oppression and known terrorist groups, such as Hamas, as [“political movements.”](#) The narrative's omissions are as significant as its distortions and inaccuracies.

Once Harvard's instructors make Israel the top perpetrator of the world's evils while omitting facts disputing their claims, Harvard's students accept that one-sided narrative.

*Israel is the last remaining colonial settler power embodying the world's worst evils.*

Because we lacked access to classrooms and to most course syllabi, we could only identify potentially relevant courses by searching for words such as “Israel” and “Palestine” in Harvard's course catalog's titles and descriptions. This is why HJAA is insisting that an independent, third-party auditor with full access to the educational offerings and classrooms be appointed to identify the full range of courses with lectures or units promoting either the anti-Israel narrative or a more balanced one.

These are examples of courses we found that either clearly address the conflict or may have relevant lectures/readings:

- *Religion, Nationalism, and Settler Colonialism: The Case of Israel/Palestine* ([HDS 3337](#) - Professor Diane Moore). “[E]xamines the conceptual logic of using a **settler-colonial** lens to interpret the history and politics of Israel/Palestine ... [and] identify the relevance of **global anti-racism** and social movements....”

- *Learning in Context: Narratives of Displacement and Belonging in Israel/Palestine* ([HDS 3335](#) - Atalia Omer, Diane Moore) examine[s] a diversity of narratives regarding displacement and belonging in and about Israel/Palestine, centering concerns with human rights, historical justice and accountability, and critical religious literacy....
- *The Settler Colonial Determinants of Health* ([GHP 264](#), School of Public Health - Professor Bram Wispelwey) introduces students "...to the **concept of settler colonialism** and its health equity implications for **indigenous and settler populations**...[u]tilizing case studies from the United States, South Africa, and **Palestine/Israel**.
- *Palestine Social Medicine Course* (School of Public Health - Yara Asi, Weeam Hammoudeh, David Mills, Osama Tannous, Bram Wispelwey) offers both conceptual and practical engagement with the structural determinants of health affecting Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Israel, and the Diaspora. "The Palestine Social Medicine Course occurs annually at Birzeit University in the West Bank, occupied Palestinian territories."
- *Middle East Ethnography: Discourse, Politics, and Culture* ([Anthropology 2690](#) - Professor Steven C. Caton). "The discursive construction of culture and its complex politics are examined in a wide range of ethnographies that have been written recently on countries in the Middle East, including ... Israel/Palestine.... Among the theoretical topics to be considered are **orientalism, colonialism and post-colonialism**, nationalism, self, **gender**, and tribalism."
- *Political Violence and Power* ([Freshman Seminar 720](#), FAS - Dr. William Whitham) "explore[s] the ethics, psychology, and sociology of political violence over the past 150 years. We'll examine fin-de-siècle anarchists, communist regimes across Eurasia, German Nazism and Italian fascism, anti-colonial struggles in Algeria and **Palestine**, and the rise of jihadi networks and far-right 'lone wolves.'"
- *A Critical Introduction to the Study of the Middle East Course* ([Hist 1800](#) - Professor Jesse Howell) "introduces students to the medieval and modern history of the Middle East. Readings and discussions will also focus on **key Harvard University 856 of 1891 categories of analysis such as orientalism, modernity, capitalism, gender, (post)colonialism, nationalism, anthropocene.**"
- *The Making of the Modern Middle East (Late-18th Century to the Present)* ([Hist 1009](#) - Professor Rosie B'sheer). The diverse themes... include... **the formation of modern nation states, colonialism and imperialism**—past and present—social and intellectual movements, gender politics, petro-states in global perspective, and Islam and politics.
- *Coloniality, Race, and Catastrophe* ([Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights 139](#) - Professor Mayra Rivera). "[E]xplores the relationship between **coloniality, race, and ecology** through the lens of "catastrophe."
- *Re-mediating Colonialism* ([English 90RC](#), Pamela Klassen). "This seminar focuses on the public memory of **settler colonialism** and Indigenous dispossession in North America and Turtle

Island....” (Turtle Island is a name for North and Central America, used by some Indigenous peoples, as well as by some Indigenous rights activists who are making the case that [Palestine’s and Turtle Island’s liberation are entwined](#)).

**In 2022-23 and 2023-24, Harvard held many events that spread the virulently anti-Israel narrative** (see Appendix A for more examples and Part 2, Section 3 for more balanced events.)

- Examples before October 7, 2023
  - Harvard Law School sponsored an event for students who had traveled to the Palestinian territories to “[bear witness to the \*apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism\* firsthand.](#)”
  - [Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and \*Decolonization\* beyond Partition](#) (Leila Farsakh, Maha Nassar, Susan Akram). “Shows how notions of citizenship, sovereignty, and nationhood are being rethought within the broader context of *decolonization*.” (CMES)
  - [Settler Colonialism, Structural Racism, and The Palestinian Right to Health Special Edition: A Conversation with the Authors](#) (Osama Tanous, Ben Bouquet, Maria Helbich, Ghada Majadli, Razzan Quran, Emily Schneider). “[E]xplore[s] the conceptual and material connections between **settler colonialism, structural racism, and human rights** approaches to Palestinian health.” (School of Public Health)
  - [Colonial Cartography in Palestine-Israel and the Decolonising Potential of Counter-Maps](#) (Zena Agha). “Examines the ways we have (re)imagined and (re)drawn the land over the past 100 years, particularly around the partition of Palestine in 1948... and examines what counter-mapping and return look like in a destroyed place.”(CMES)
  - [Palestine Trek Bearing Witness to \*apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism\*](#). This year, 170+ Harvard graduate students went on a spring break trek to occupied Palestine. They met with Palestinian activists, lawyers, academics, students, artists and witnessed apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism firsthand. (Harvard Law School)
- After October 7, 2023, it was more of the same.
  - [Israel-Hamas War? Tackling the Root Causes](#) (Israel's settler-colonial and carceral occupation). Francesca Albanese (CMES)
  - [Palestine and the Historian: \*A History Department Symposium\*](#), included a Panel: “**Borders, Apartheid, and Carcerality.**” (History Department)

- [\*The South Africa ICJ Genocide Case Against Israel: Implications for Palestinian Health\*](#), Timothy Fish-Hodgson, Katherine Iliopoulos, Tlaleng Mofokeng, Rania Muhared (CMES, Public Health)
- [\*We Charge Genocide, the Potential and Limits of International Law\*](#) (Nora Erakat).
- [\*"Colonizing Palestine: The Zionist Left and the Making of the Palestinian Nakba,"\*](#)<sup>2</sup>(Areej Sabbagh-Khoury).
- [\*Palestinian Women in Gaza: War, Health, and Feminist Solidarity\*](#), (Zahra Ali, Lila Sharif, Sara Ihmoud).

CMES's recommended [Readings and Digital Resources on Palestine](#) doesn't seem to include a single resource providing a more balance or an alternative perspective.

- Professor [Cemal Kafadar](#) (CMES Director) and Professor [Rosie Bsheer](#) (CMES Associate Director) curated a list of roughly 60 resources with the expressed purpose to “offer analyses and histories of expulsion, **occupation, settler colonialism**, forced evictions, home demolitions, and annexation that situate the current struggle as part of the ongoing **Nakba of 1948 and in relation to the Naksa of 1967.**”

The demands by the [Harvard Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine](#) in its January 24 statement also repeat the narrative.

- “The US government, media, and other institutions of knowledge production have long provided financial, military, moral, and political cover for the Israeli **occupation** and its **colonial, racial violence.**”
- “We call on the university to withdraw investments from the State of Israel and all companies that sustain Israeli **apartheid, settler colonialism**, and systematic human rights abuses against Palestinians.”
- “As educational workers, we are focused on boycotts of Israeli academic institutions that support **apartheid** and **colonial occupation.**”

Some Harvard courses/faculty appear to excuse or even valorize violence against Israel.

*Some courses/faculty appear to excuse or even valorize violence against Israel*

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of “the Nakba” is hotly debated. In Arabic, “Nakba,” which means “catastrophe,” is the term Arab countries use to describe the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Israel and others call this war “the War of Independence.” As with everything else related to this subject, there are [multiple perspectives](#) on the evolution of the word’s meaning.

- [CMES' website](#) references Hamas 15 times without using the word terror or terrorism.
- Roughly a decade ago, Sara Roy, a Harvard lecturer and associate of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, published [a book claiming Hamas had “emphasized not political violence but rather community development and civic restoration....”](#) The lecturer still hasn't acknowledged any contradiction with her previous claim.
- [Jihad, War and Peace in Islamic Law and Practice](#) (MODMDEST 207), taught by Emad Shahin, describes terrorist organizations (Al-Qaeda and ISIS) as **“contemporary political movements.”** Excerpts from a required reading: “[T]he suicide bomber belongs in an important sense to a liberal tradition of armed conflict for the establishment or defense of a national community.”
- In [her EdX course](#), Professor Diane Moore, Associate Dean of the Religion and Public Life Program at the Divinity School, describes the terrorist group Hamas as **“a Palestinian Islamic movement, founded with the goal of establishing a Palestinian state that includes the West Bank.”**
- A now-removed October 13, 2024 statement by the Divinity School's Religion and Public Life Program after Hamas' massacre of Israelis acknowledged the “losses on both sides.” It went on to say, **“Start with the rockets fired into Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023, and not with the illegal occupation of Palestinian land by Israel and the blockade of Gaza since 2007, and you have an entirely different story.”** The passive-voice mention of “rockets fired into Israel” is the stand-in for the self-reported (and self-recorded) massacre and the murdering of over 1000 Israeli civilians, including Palestinian Muslims.

Some students understand that these narratives are false. As one student noted: “In terms of our education... people don't understand what Zionism is. They think it's white settler colonialism. People need to understand the history, not just the Holocaust, but of the Jewish people and why it's so important for there to be a Jewish state.” But many students, Jewish and otherwise, don't know this information. Once Harvard's instructors make Israel the top perpetrator of the worst evils while omitting facts disputing their claims, Harvard's students accept that one-sided narrative.

*Once Harvard's instructors make Israel the top perpetrator of the worst evils while omitting facts disputing their claims, Harvard's students accept that one-sided narrative.*

### The Source of the Narrative's Labels

### Soviet Union Cold War Propaganda Disseminated to Western Academics

There is now substantial literature, including [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), on how many of the anti-Israel slogans were the brainchild of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Soviets wanted to weaken and divide Israel, Jews, and America and unify the Arab world under Soviet leadership. Still, they also recognized that overt anti-Semitism wouldn't fly so soon after the Holocaust.

So, they made anti-Semitism respectable through "Anti-Zionism." Soviet apparatchiks applied age-old anti-Semitic tropes to Israel, invented new ones to resonate with left-wing Western academics, and then packaged and disseminated the propaganda directly to the European and American Left and the developing world. Its staying power is due, in part, to [elder Arab leaders](#) who were educated and financed by the USSR.

We can thank Soviet propaganda for many of the slogans we hear across Harvard's campus today, including:

- **"Zionism is Racism."**
- **"Zionists weaponize anti-Semitism."**
- **"Anti-Zionism is not equal to anti-Semitism."**
- **"Israel is conducting genocide."**
- **Israel is a "settler colonial state."** (This was coined in 1965 by a Syrian-Palestinian academic/diplomat, [Fayez Sayegh](#), before Israel controlled the Palestinian territories.)

This history explains why, according to Einat Wilf, Israeli scholar, former politician, and Harvard graduate, every time someone repeats these slogans, ["a Soviet angel claps its wings."](#)<sup>3</sup>

*We can thank Soviet (KGB) propaganda during the Cold War for many of the slogans we hear on Harvard's campus today.*

### 3. In Search of Alternative Perspectives, Including from the Center for Jewish Studies (CJS)

Given Harvard's mission "[to advance new ideas and promote enduring knowledge](#)," we would have expected that the University would prioritize preparing its students to research, analyze, debate, and grapple with the most complex topics and problems of our time.

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<sup>3</sup> Labeling Israel an "apartheid state" began at an NGO Forum in 2001 in Durban, South Africa (during the UN's [World Conference against Racism](#)).

Some Harvard offerings seem to present greater balance or another perspective on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

#### 2022-23 School Year

- Harvard Law School sponsored a number of events that provide another perspective.
  - The four events in February 2023 included [Progressive Case for Israel](#) (Former NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio), [Deconstructing Apartheid: International Humanitarian Law & Israel](#) (Anne Herzberg), [Diversity in Israel](#) (Anne Herzberg), and [an event with Ambassador Dan Shapiro](#).
  - In the Spring of 2023, the Law School, in partnership with the Center for Jewish Studies, also offered [a series of lectures on Jewish and Israeli law](#), although the nature of the content isn't clear.
- In the spring of 2023, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School held a 5-session study group, [Frozen Conflict: Discussing Israel/Palestine with Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian](#); Another Belfer Center seminar departing from the narrative was Daniel Sobelman's event in April 2023, [Asymmetric Coercion and Rules of the Game: Theory and Evidence from the Israel-Hamas Conflict in the Gaza Strip](#).
- Professor Derek Penslar offers a course, [Jews in the Modern World \(History 1017\)](#) that includes lectures on Jews in Israel.

#### Since October 7, 2023

- The following events/series seek better balance:
  - Law Professor Noah Feldman offered an [event about the war](#) in November 2023.
  - One of [14 post-October 7<sup>th</sup> events](#) sponsored by the Law School rejects the anti-Israel narrative.
  - Kennedy School Professor Tarek Masoud hosted a series, [Middle East Dialogues](#), to [engage diverse speakers](#). (One of the speakers, unfortunately, had previously [claimed that Israelis were the October 7<sup>th</sup> perpetrators](#) and Hamas militants were the victims.)
  - Some speakers in a [series by the Weatherhead Center](#) about the war appear more neutral (although at least one speaker focused mainly on Israel's transgressions leading up to October 7th).

There certainly isn't a critical mass of faculty or events offering a more balanced or alternative perspective on the Hamas/Israel war or on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and its history.



It is essential that an independent third-party auditor who knows the ample and highly regarded peer-reviewed literature on Israel, the Palestinians, Hamas, and the Middle East—and has full access to Harvard's curricula and classrooms—be appointed who can identify who is teaching students a diversity of views. (See Appendix B)

There are two possibilities. Either Harvard's professors know this peer-reviewed literature and choose to ignore it, or they do not even know about it. Either way, it is not a good look for Harvard.

*Either Harvard's professors know this peer-reviewed literature and choose to ignore it, or they do not even know about it. Either way, it is not a good look for Harvard.*

We expected that the Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) would be pushing back against the narrative. Instead, CJS seems to want to avoid the topic of modern Israel almost entirely.

*The Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) seems to want to avoid the topic of modern Israel almost entirely.*

- In 2023-24, only one out of 40 CJS courses (excluding language courses) even partially relates to Israel. See [here](#) and [here](#). Instead, it is teaching such subjects as:
  - *Medicine in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust—Anatomy as Example for Changes in Medical Science*
  - *Zombies and Spirits, Ghosts and Ghouls: Interactions between the Living and the Dead*
  - *Early Christian Apocrypha*
  - *Jewish Mysticism: From the Spanish Expulsion to the New Age*
  - *Advanced Topics in Jewish Law: The Law of the Messiah*
  - *Jewish Law and Critical Theory Seminar*

*In 2023-24, only one out of the 40 courses offered by Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies focuses even partially on Israel.*

- Between October 7, 2023, and April 2024, it appears that only 3 of the [34 CJS-sponsored events](#) focused on the war between Israel and Hamas or on the crisis facing Jews worldwide. Among the other events:
  - *Ethiopian Jewish Identity: A Journey through the Prism of Scientific Knowledge*
  - *Black & Jewish, a Talk Series, I was not black, I became black here:" Formation of Blackness in*

#### *Israel*

- *Jews and Crypto-Christianity in 18th-Century Europe: The Case of Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschiütz*
  - *Disastrous Diseases and Ritual Resilience: Early Modern Jews Confront Plague*
  - *The Missing Link? Early Modern Jewish Scholasticism*
  - *From the Four Corners of the World: Judeo-Arabic Journalism in 19th-20th Century North Africa*
  - *Jewish Prayers for Divine Vengeance*
  - *It Could Lead to Dancing*
  - *Jews in Modern Europe Seminar*
  - *Israel at its Finest Hour: Emotional Management on the Eve of the 1967 War*
  - *Seeing Another People: Historical American Jewish Encounters with Palestinians*
- CJS Professors hired by Harvard since 2000 seem to have other priorities.
    - [One](#) has expertise in “critical theory and gender and sexuality studies.”
    - [Another](#) focuses on “the interplay between Yiddish, Russian, and Hebrew language and literature in modern, secularizing Jewish culture ... especially as they relate to queer and gender studies, multilingualism, ex-Orthodoxy, and migration.”
    - [A third CJS professor](#) is a “critical theorist and a historian of modern European philosophy and social thought, specializing in Frankfurt School critical theory, phenomenology, existentialism, and Western Marxism.”
  - [Visiting professors/lecturers](#) do not appear to fill the gap.
    - In 2022-23, CJS brought in an Israeli historian to teach two courses: one on the Eastern European Jews 1700-1939 and the other on modern Jewish politics (which addresses “Israel/Palestine” through the twentieth century but focuses on Central and Eastern Europe).
    - In 2023-24, one visiting lecturer’s focus is “diversity-focused journalism,” while another’s course is on Jews in the medieval period.
    - CJS’s 2023-24 fellowship theme is “Jewish migration in the 16th-21st centuries.”

## 4. Event Speakers/Visiting Professors with a Public Paper Trail of Anti-Semitism

Professors, lecturers, and event speakers whom Harvard invites to campus celebrate violence (against Israel and the West) and traffic in anti-Semitic tropes (including the [blood libel](#) claim that Jews kill non-Jews to use their blood for their ritual food and drink.) More recently, speakers have denied the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre or blamed it entirely on Israel.

### Examples of Harvard’s Event Speakers

Dalal Saeb Iriqat, speaker at Kennedy School

- [“What happened on 10/7?”](#) The burnt bodies were Hamas militants & now we learn Israeli helicopter fire may have killed ravers!”

**Rashid Khalidi**, Columbia University professor who has presented at multiple Harvard talks/conferences (and, according to numerous sources, was the [former spokesman for the Palestinian Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) in the 1970s)

- Referring to “a group of people, a lot of them in Israel and some in the United States,” said, “Unfortunately, these people infest the Trump transition team; these people are going to [infest our government](#) as of January 20.”

**Mohammed el-Kurd**, a frequent guest of the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), who has spoken at HLS in 2021, 2022, and 2023

- Claimed that “they [Israelis] [harvest organs](#) of the martyred [Palestinians], feed their warriors our own.”
- Stated that [Zionists have an “unquenchable thirst for Palestinian blood.”](#)
- [Celebrated the Second Intifada](#) (five years of Palestinian terrorism against Israel): “Today marks 21 years since the start of the Second Intifada. Glory to those who resisted and sacrificed. Glory to the martyrs.... The struggle continues until liberation.”

**Francesca Albanese**, UN Special Rapporteur, Palestinian territories, speaker at HLS event:

- Her [2014 open letter](#) said: “America and Europe, one of them subjugated by the Jewish lobby, and the other by the sense of guilt about the Holocaust.”

**Taurean Webb**, a Harvard Divinity School Religion and Public Life Fellow, event speaker:

- [Said/wrote the following comments](#) about American Jews: “It’s also a historical fact that [American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure in this country....We know that from the data.](#)”
- [“Israel uses the idea of ‘chosenness’](#) and the European Jewish Holocaust as a tactic of racial control.”

*“It’s also a historical fact that American Jewish immigrants have always been a foundational building block for the white supremacist infrastructure in this country....We know that from the data.” - Harvard fellow*

## Harvard’s recent visiting professors/scholars

- [Emad Shahrin](#), CMES Shawwaf Visiting Professor, taught [five Harvard classes](#) on the modern Middle East during the 2022-23 school year. (Before that, Shahrin had been

[convicted in absentia of "conspiring with foreign armed groups, including Hamas and the Lebanese group Hezbollah,"](#) to destabilize Egypt.) He is the professor who kicked an Israeli visiting student out of class when he allowed other visiting to stay in class.

- [Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian](#), a 2023-24 Religion and Public Life Visiting Scholar in Conflict and Peace at the Divinity School:
  - In 2019, [claimed](#) that the Israeli military was using Palestinian children to test its weapons.
  - [Denied the rape of Israelis by Hamas](#) on October 7<sup>th</sup> (despite live footage).
- [Yael Berda](#), a Harvard visiting scholar since 2020, described Israel's permit system for allowing Palestinians to enter Israel as follows: ["\[I\]t's not about security! It's about segregation, separation, and containment."](#)

## 5. Anti-Democratic Middle Eastern Countries Picking Up the Tab

*From 2020 to 2023, Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) allegedly received \$1.5 billion from foreign entities and governments.*

- [Between 2014 and 2019, Harvard received \\$894 million](#) from Middle Eastern anti-democratic governments. During those same years, Harvard's five [gifts from Israel](#) totaled [\\$3.1 million](#).
- From 2020 to 2023, Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) allegedly received [\\$1.5 billion](#) from foreign entities and governments.
- Although Harvard won't publicize how it spends these funds, it sometimes is obvious—e.g., the [Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program](#) and the four [Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professorships](#). Otherwise, it is a black box.
- A recent report connects the total amount of foreign funding by authoritarian countries to US colleges with the erosion of free speech and an [increase in anti-Semitic events on their college campuses](#).

## PART III

### Sidechat: Where No One Knows Your Name

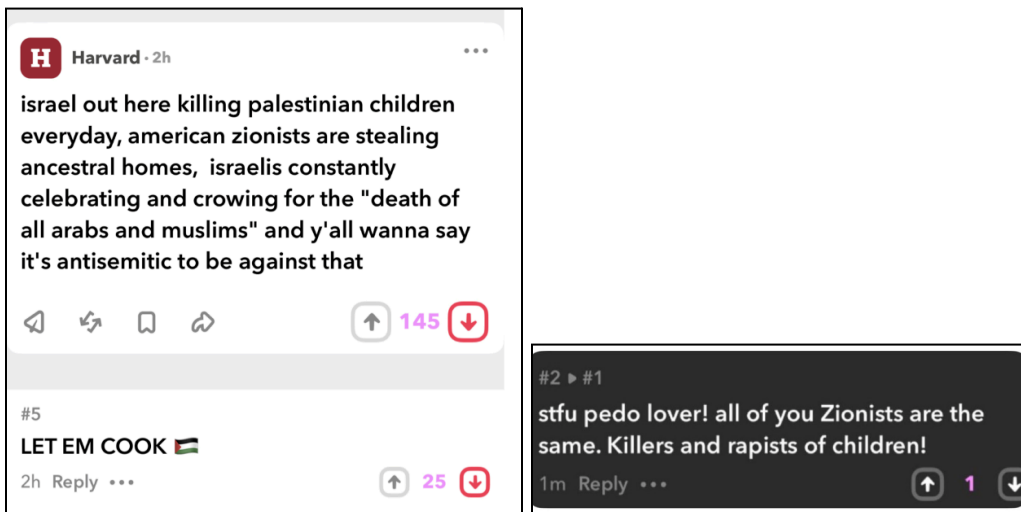
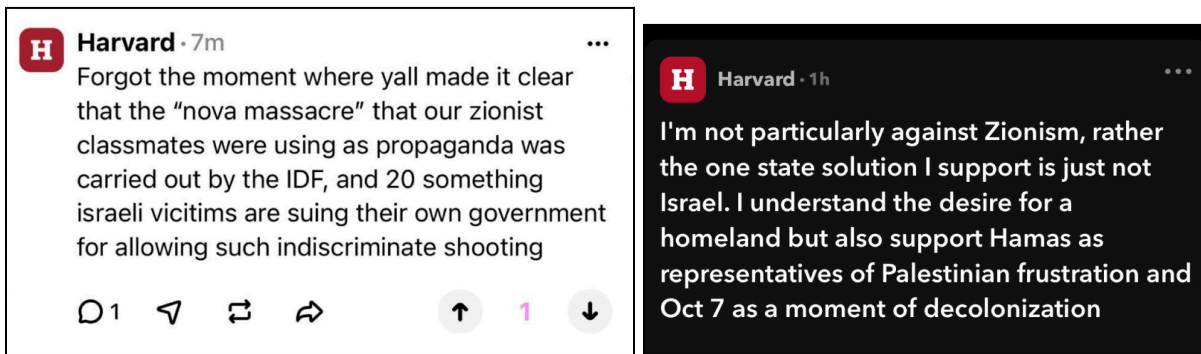
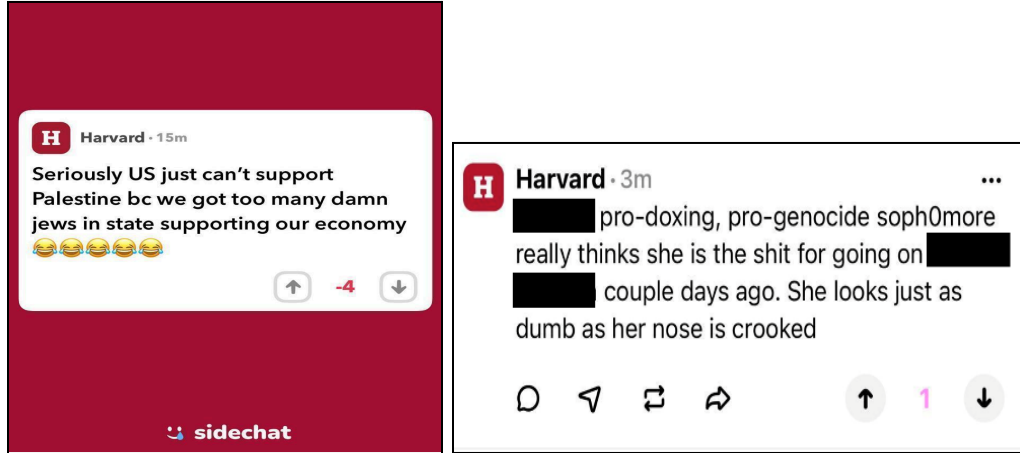
#### **The Social Media Platform Exclusively Used By Harvard Students is Replete with Unchecked Anti-Semitism**

Harvard's very own anonymous social media platform, Sidechat, which requires a Harvard email address to log on, has exploded with anti-Semitic tropes and posts.

- “When you see posts [on Sidechat] that are so vehemently anti-Israel and false and are getting 500 - 700 upvotes, [it's clear that] we've lost the information war on this campus because you see such a significant percentage of the student body think Israel is a colonialist apartheid state - just look at the upvotes.”
- “Sidechat is always gross, and I typically like it because a lot of it's funny, and you just sort of ignore the gross parts, but I had to delete it because it was just too much. I couldn't handle it emotionally. But one thing that I saw, and I actually reported it to the moderators for being antisemitic, and then they didn't take it down, they didn't agree.... They were basically saying, ‘I don't understand why, I really don't get how, okay, so some white Germans killed some white Jews a while ago, and now they get a whole country [because of the] Holocaust....’ People saw it and were like, ‘yes, I agree with this. This makes sense.’”
- Two friends and I wrote an article for the Crimson.... I was very proud to be a part of that. There were no repercussions in person, but it was a different story on Sidechat. They always claim they aren't antisemitic, but the truth of [how they feel can be seen] on Sidechat. [After our article was published], we were called Zionist puppets.”

*“[On Sidechat] they were basically saying... ‘I really don't get how, okay, so some white Germans killed some white Jews a while ago, and now they get a whole country [because of the] Holocaust....’”*

Although there are too many Sidechat posts to share in this one document, below are some examples.



Posts like the ones above spurred Harvard, in January 2024, to ask Sidechat to better moderate content and restrict access only to undergraduates. The un-coded anti-Semitism reputedly has tamped down some since, but that is little comfort to Jewish students.



The confidence students must have to post and like these posts, likely because they are anonymous, exposes a deep-seated and pervasive hatred of Jews—and a serious education crisis—at Harvard.



## PART IV

# Harvard's Nonresponse

### Harvard's Administration Continues to Be Unresponsive to Most Attacks on Jewish Students

The Administration has repeatedly ignored Jewish students' pleas for help (and their formal complaints) despite clear violations of Harvard's [non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies](#). There have been few to no consequences for the perpetrators of hate speech and bullying. And now we know [there will not be consequences for those students, faculty, and staff in the protests and encampments](#) who have made Jews feel physically unsafe and disrupted and imperiled the broader Harvard community.

Although we tried but failed to get information about the number of complaints/reports Jewish students submitted and the resolutions, here is what we heard from students.

*"The double standards of the Harvard administration is very jarring."*

- From the student who was kicked out of a class for being Israeli: "First, I reached out to Hillel, and I asked them what should I do. They checked, and they told me to file a complaint through the DEI [office]. I had a conversation with my Resident Dean and Dean Khurana.... Everyone said, 'Hey, I hear you.' There was no follow-up."
- From the student who discussed the swastika in Currier House: "All Harvard did to address it was that the faculty deans of Currier put out a statement that said, 'We deplore hate.' The statement went to the Currier House email listserv. It was never addressed more broadly. I have a friend who lived there and was very angry, and so that's how I knew about it."
- "The double standard of the Harvard administration is very jarring. A gay law school student was assaulted by another law school student. An email went out to every student at the law school the same day saying that they were suspending the person. It has been three weeks since the assault [of a Jewish student at Harvard Business School], and only one of the people has been removed from an official Harvard position [but not suspended]."
- "At the talk, one of the moderators was an HDS [Harvard Divinity School] student, and that student is under FBI investigation for the now infamous protest at HBS [Harvard Business School; this student participated in the assault on a Jewish student].... He got fired from

being a proctor but is still a student. I saw him in class today, wearing his Keffiyeh. HDS students have written countless letters saying that they kicked him out because he's black and because he's pro-Palestinian.”

- We keep meeting with the Administration, and nothing happens. They are not enforcing their [First Amendment] time, place, and manner restrictions. These students are getting a pass which leads me to wonder: what's going to happen next year?”
- “[A University] administrator ... said that ‘intifada’ is a 2 out of 10 in terms of hate speech.”

We, too, never received a response to an earlier draft of this report, which we shared with Interim President Alan Garber, Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana, and Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick on January 22, 2024. On February 25<sup>th</sup>, President Garber asked us if he could share our report with his Task Force on Antisemitism. Two months later, on April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Task Force’s co-chair, Professor Derek Penslar, requested a copy of the report from us because he had yet to receive one from the Administration.

Harvard’s double standard when it comes to protecting its Jewish students is the basis for HJAA’s first stated request: For the Administration and Corporation to “take swift, concrete and public action to enforce the University’s codes of conduct *uniformly and without exception*, and discipline students, faculty and staff who violate them.” Here is a complete list of HJAA’s objectives and requests.

### **HJAA Objectives and Requests**

As concerned alumni of Harvard University, we, the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance (HJAA), advocate for “a community that is open, welcoming and inclusive and that supports all community members in pursuit of the University’s mission of learning, teaching, research and discovery” per Harvard’s anti-bullying policy.

We believe that achieving the University's stated mission requires an environment that encourages informed dialogue, critical thinking, mutual respect, empathy, academic integrity, and academic freedom. Harvard’s mission also requires a safe learning and non-hostile work environment.

To restore such a community, we request that the administration promptly:

- Take swift, concrete, and public action to enforce the University’s codes of conduct uniformly and without exception, and discipline students, faculty, and staff who violate them. Disrupting classes and occupying buildings should not be tolerated.
- Adopt the globally accepted International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, including its examples, as part of the official Harvard policies for identifying and investigating alleged incidents of antisemitic discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and other behavior.
- Adopt University-wide a set of clear principles on academic freedom and institutional neutrality, such as those promulgated by The Council on Academic Freedom at Harvard.

- Initiate an independent, third-party investigation tasked with creating a public report of various practices at each Harvard school, including curriculum, events, admissions policies, and student, faculty, or administrator behavior that may violate Harvard's anti-discrimination policy and/or its anti-bullying policy and/or IHRA definition.
- Launch a transparent inquiry, followed by a public report, about the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) office objectives and practices at each Harvard school, in light of their failure to sufficiently include Jews and antisemitism in their mission and programming.
- Mandate that all faculty, staff, and offices whose responsibility is to address issues of discrimination receive ongoing training on the IHRA definition with all its examples, and the use of social media and other platforms to spread hate and bigotry.

## Conclusion: Harvard, Are You Listening?

Denied equal access to an education and experience. Denied equal application of the code of conduct. Afraid for their physical, emotional, and intellectual safety. Victims of a pervasive cancel culture. Subject to a pervasive hostile environment, even within classrooms.

We will leave it to the academics to debate theoretically whether anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. In practice, the [impact for Jews at Harvard is what it has always been](#) when any community, academic or otherwise, obsessively demonizes and delegitimizes the only Jewish state.

*The impact for Jews at Harvard is what it has always been when any community, academic or otherwise, obsessively demonizes and delegitimizes the only Jewish state.*

As HJAA members, we started by examining the impact of Harvard's education on Israeli and other Jewish students. We now understand that the problem is far deeper. One faculty member explained why: ***"Yes, students are under attack. But mainly, all of them should feel ripped off.... It is indoctrination, not education."*** A student with whom we spoke concurred, "Almost everybody I know, including myself, does not represent their true attitudes in the classroom."

Once again, Jewish and Israeli students are the proverbial "canaries in the coal mine." What they are experiencing reflects the failure of education writ large. Yes, they came for us Jews first, but democratic, liberal values are at risk.

*Yes, they came for us Jews first, but democratic, liberal values are at risk.*

But it doesn't have to be this way. Harvard, are you listening?

## Appendix A Harvard Events Perpetuating the Anti-Israel Narrative

September 2022 - June 2023

### Work in Progress

#### Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)

April 2023

##### **Decolonizing Israel: The Potential Contribution of the Palestinian Citizens**

**Nadim Rouhana**, Professor of International Negotiation and Conflict Studies, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University; Discussant: Atalia Omer, Professor of Religion, Conflict and Peace Studies, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame, and the T. J. Dermot Dunphy Visiting Professor of Religion, Violence, and Peacebuilding, Harvard Divinity School  
Co-sponsors: CMES/WCFIA Middle East Seminar, CMES Middle East Forum

Co-sponsor: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs

\* \* \*

March 2023

##### **Jerusalem: Examining Settler Colonialism and Undoing Colonial Knowledge Production**

The WCFIA/CMES Middle East Seminar is pleased to present

**Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian**, Lawrence D Biele Chair in Law, Institute of Criminology-Faculty of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Chair in Global Law, Queen Mary University of London; Discussant: **M. Brinton Lykes**, PhD, Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology and Co-Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Boston College  
Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's research focuses on trauma, state crimes and criminology, surveillance, gender violence, law and society. She studies the crime of femicide and other forms of gendered based violence, violence against children in conflict ridden areas, crimes of abuse of power in settler colonial contexts, surveillance, securitization and social control.

Co-sponsor: Weatherhead Center

\* \* \*

March 2023

##### **American Public Views Towards the Middle East: The Political Psychology of Racialization**

**Karam Dana**, Alyson McGregor Distinguished Professor of Excellence and Transformative Research at the University of Washington Bothell. Karam Dana is a Palestinian American academic. Dana is one of the earliest scholars of Islam and Muslims in the US, and served as the co-PI of the Muslim American Public Opinion Survey (MAPOS), which was one of the earliest national surveys of American Muslims. He also studies the question of Palestine, the impact of Israeli occupation on Palestinian society, and Palestinian transnationalism.

Co-sponsor: Weatherhead Center

\* \* \*

**February 2023**

**Crossing a Line: Laws, Violence and Roadblocks to Political Expression - Book Event with Amahl Bishara**

**Amahl A. Bishara**, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Tufts University

*Moderator/Respondent:* **Raef Zreik**, Religion and Public Life Visiting Scholar in Conflict and Peace,

Co-Sponsor Harvard Divinity School

\* \* \*

**November 2022**

**Book event: "Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization beyond Partition"**

**Leila Farsakh**, Associate Professor of Political Science at University of Massachusetts, Boston;

**Maha Nassar**, Associate Professor, Modern Middle East History, Islamic Studies at University of Arizona; **Susan Akram**, Clinical Professor of Law, Boston University

*Moderated by:* **Rabea Eghbariah**, RCPI Topol Fellow

Co-sponsor: Harvard Divinity School Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative

\* \* \*

**November 2022**

**Colonial Cartography in Palestine-Israel and the Decolonising Potential of Counter-Maps**

**Zena Agha**, PhD Candidate, Newcastle University; Visiting Fellow, CMES

This talk examines the geographical imaginaries of mapping practices in Palestine-Israel and the potential of counter-mapping in a project of decolonisation.

Zena Agha is a Palestinian-Iraqi writer, poet and multi-disciplinary artist from London.

\* \* \*

**October 2022**

**Book talk: "Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire"**

The CMES Middle East Forum, Harvard University, the Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative, Religion and Public Life, Harvard Divinity School, and The FXB Center for Health & Human Rights present a tour of the newly released book

***Light in Gaza: Writings Born of Fire***

with contributors **Asmaa AbuMezied**: author of "Lost Identity: The Tale of Peasantry and Nature;" **Yousef Aljamal**: author of "Travel Restrictions as a Manifestation of Nakba: Gaza, the Path Backward is the Path Forward;" **Jehad Abusalim**, co-editor and author of the introduction to *Light in Gaza*, will provide concluding remarks.

\* \* \*

**October 2022**

**Viruses Remaking Borders? Unwanted Organisms in Palestine/Israel from Covid-19 to Climate Change**

**Natalia Gutkowski**, Postdoctoral scholar, The Society of Fellows, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Moderator: **Steven Caton**, Khalid Bin Abdullah Bin Abdulrahman Al Saud Professor of Contemporary Arab Studies, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

**Natalia Gutkowski** is a social anthropologist and a political ecologist working on interfaces of state governance and power in the agrarian environment in Palestine/Israel and beyond.

\* \* \*

**September 2022**

**Hamas in Cyberspace: Social Media and New Forms of Political Expression**

**The CMES Middle East Forum is pleased to present Mohammedwesam Amer**, Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Researcher, Centre For Middle East Studies, Harvard University; Dean, Faculty of Mass Communication and Languages, Gaza University, Palestine

### **School of Public Health**

**May 2023**

**Escalating Violence and Restrictions on Health in Palestine: An On-The-Ground Perspective**

**Dr. Abdulsalam Khayyat**, Vice President for Academic Affairs, An-Najah National University;

**Yara M. Asi**, PhD, Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida in the School of Global Health Management and Informatics; **Benjamin Bouquet**, PhD, Technical Officer for Public

Health and Human Rights with the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territory;

**Maryam Mustafa**, Community Health Worker, health program coordinator in the Balata refugee

camp; **Ossama Mustafa**, Yafa Cultural Center Director of International Relations and Projects; **Dr. Fouad Nafaa**, Head of Rafidia Hospital Surgical Department in Nablus.

Join the FXB Center's Palestine Program for Health and Human Rights, the An-Najah National University Virtual Exchange Collaborative, and the An-Najah Global Health Institute for a panel discussion around the escalating violence and restrictions on health in Palestine with speakers offering perspectives from their work in the region.

\* \* \*

**December 2022**

**Settler Colonialism, Structural Racism, and The Palestinian Right to Health Special Edition: A conversation with the Authors**

**Carmel Williams**, PhD, executive editor of Health and Human Rights, the FXB Center's flagship publication; **Osama Tanous**, MD, pediatrician and public health scholar based in Haifa and a

clinical instructor of pediatrics in the Technion, Haifa; **Benjamin Bouquet**, PhD candidate in health and human rights and medical doctor in Palestine; **Maria Helbich**, MSc, clinical

psychotherapist (Psychodrama) from Vienna, Austria, specializing in gender-based violence and trauma; **Ghada Majadli**, director, department of The Occupied Palestinian Territory at Physicians

for Human Rights Israel (PHRI); **Razzan Quran**, Doctoral Student in Psychodynamic

Psychotherapy, Palestinian social justice organizer; **Emily Schneider**, Assistant Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northern Arizona University.

\* \* \*



October 2022

### **The Embodiment of Protest: Hunger Strikes, Human Rights, and the Health of Palestinian Political Prisoners**

The FXB Center for Health & Human Rights, the Religion, Conflict, and Peace Initiative, Religion and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School and the Middle East Forum, Center for Middle Eastern Studies are pleased to present:

**Dr. Lina Qasem Hassan**, Physician and Chairperson, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel

**Sahar Francis**, Director General, Addameer Prisoner's Support and Human Rights Association

Moderator: **Randa Wahbe**, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University


Hunger strikes have been used as means for non-violent resistance and protest over the past several decades by Palestinian political prisoners in Israel/Palestine. The featured panelists will draw on their expertise and experience in the fields of health and human rights to explore various legal, medical, and human rights dimensions of hunger strikes being staged by Palestinian political prisoners.

### **Divinity School**

#### **May 2023 Video**

#### **The Palestinian Question as a Jewish Question**

**Raef Zreik**, Religion and Public Life Visiting Scholar in Conflict and Peace

Zreik interrogates the ways questions of war and peace, borders, security, or the 'two state' solution become more and more internal to Israel. Related intimately to the state's identity, character and constitutional structure and democratic nature, these questions highlight the merging conversation of existence and essence.  **The Palestinian Question as a Jewish Question**

\* \* \*

#### **September 2022**

#### **"Learning in Context: Narratives of Displacement and Belonging in Israel/Palestine"**

HDS students from the 2022 trip, in an evening of storytelling, poetry, and photography, discuss their experiences of joy and resistance from their summer in Israel/Palestine.

<https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/news/2023/4/8/video-displacement-and-belonging-israelpalestine>

\* \* \*

### **Harvard Law School**

#### **April 2023**

#### **Palestine Trek Bearing Witness**

170+ Harvard graduate students went on a spring break trek to occupied Palestine. They met with Palestinian activists, lawyers, academics, students, artists and witnessed apartheid, military occupation, and settler-colonialism firsthand. Now, they're back, and they'd like to share their experiences with the rest of the Harvard community. Come join PalTrek's Bear Witness share-back session to learn about what they saw while in occupied Palestine, how it affected them, and how their experiences connect to the broader struggle for Palestinian liberation.

\* \* \*

**April 2023**

**Graduate Students 4 Palestine: Go Back and Tell Them What You Saw**

Curious about what it is like to spend your summer living in Israel/Palestine? Join graduate students across the Harvard schools . . . as they share their experiences of joy and resistance from their summer and how graduate students can get involved in the newly launched Graduate Students 4 Palestine.

\* \* \*

**March 2023**

**Settler Logics: The Israeli Settlement Movement in Context**

**Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler**, Assoc. Prof. at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Reichman University (IDC Herzliya) and **Oded Haklai**, Prof. of Political Science and Director of the Laboratory for Ethnic Conflict Research at Queens University.

A discussion of the Israeli settler movement in light of current legal and political developments in Israel and in comparison with other settler systems around the world.

\* \* \*

**February 2023**

**Litigating Palestinian Rights in the Israeli Supreme Court: Legitimation or Resistance**

This talk explores cause lawyering and strategic litigation of Palestinian rights before the Israeli Supreme Court. It reflects on the fundamental question of bringing Palestinian cases before the Israeli Court: is it a strategy that ultimately contributes to legitimizing fundamentally unjust policies, or is it a medium of legal resistance?

\* \* \*

**October 2022**

**A Conversation with Omar Shakir, Israel-Palestine Program Director at Human Rights Watch**

**Omar Shakir**, Director of Human Rights Watch's Israel-Palestine Program will speak with students about his work at HRW, apartheid in Israel, and global solidarity movements.

\* \* \*

**Harvard Kennedy School**

**February 2023**

**Colonial Bureaucracy and Contemporary Citizenship**

**Dr. Yael Berda**, MEI Fellow and Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University, will discuss her new book, *Colonial Bureaucracy and Contemporary Citizenship*, which examines how the legacies of colonial bureaucratic structures continue to shape political life after empire, with a focus on the former British colonies of India, Cyprus, and Israel/Palestine, with MEI Senior Fellow and journalist **Rami Khouri**.

Sponsored by the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

## The Weatherhead Center for International Affairs

See CMES

\* \* \*

## The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy

[Nathan Thrall's "A Day in the Life of Abed Salama"](#)

A book talk with author **Nathan Thrall** as he discusses his latest book, *A Day in the Life of Abed Salama*, with Carr Center Senior Fellow, **Kenneth Roth**.

Sample from the 2022 - 2023 School Year

## Appendix B

### The Narrative's Inaccuracies, Distortions, and Omissions

**There is a large and highly regarded peer-reviewed body of literature exposing the prevailing narrative's inaccuracies, distortions, and omissions.**

- Jews were indigenous to the land of Israel and have had a continuous presence there for over 3000 years, with a Jewish kingdom by 900 BCE. (See [here](#) and [here](#).) Jews who came from Eastern Europe to Israel after World War II moved to Israel as bedraggled, displaced refugees, often having languished in displaced person camps for years after WWII because no country would take them.
- Less than half of Israelis are white. [Israel is a multi-ethnic society](#). More than half of Israelis are descendants of Jews coming from other Middle Eastern countries, having been expelled (often violently) after Israel was established; more than 20% of Israelis have an Arab or Druze identity. The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians is not a racial one.
- Unlike in Gaza, Arab citizens of Israel have the same political rights as Jewish Israelis and have served in the Israeli [government](#), [in parliament](#), and [as judges](#).
- Hamas is not a grassroots movement of freedom fighters acting out a desperation; it is a [well-established and very well-funded franchise](#) of a global network of armed organizations devoted to [global jihad](#), eliminating Israel, and [killing as many Jews as possible](#). (Even its more PR-friendly [Charter in 2017](#) (a revision of [its 1988 Charter](#)) calls for eliminating Israel.)

**The anti-Israel narrative omits vital facts about and the complexities of the Middle East.**

- Israel's violence against Palestinians and supposed desire to absorb the Palestinian Territories anchor the narrative. What the narrative doesn't cover:
  - There is no acknowledgment that, after living across the Middle East for 2500 years, [roughly 900,000 Jews were persecuted](#), lost their property, and faced severe violence in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen before many of them came to Israel.
  - Israel has offered, and the Palestinians have repeatedly ([1937](#), [1948](#), [2000](#), [2008](#)) refused to accept a nation-state for themselves if it meant Israel would have a state of its own.
  - During the most ambitious peace negotiations, the Palestinians launched the [Second Intifada](#). From 2000 to 2005, over 100 Palestinian suicide bombings maimed or killed Israelis in Israeli buses, cafes, and streets.
  - Hamas launched significant attacks against Israel in [2008](#), [2009](#), [2014](#), [2021](#), and then on October 7<sup>th</sup>. And, in between, it has fired [tens of thousands of rockets](#) into southern Israel with the intent of maximizing civilian harm.

- Israel is the size of [New Jersey](#) (8,600 square miles) and has a population of 9 million people. Israel is surrounded by 22 Arab states which [encompass 5 million square miles and have over 450 million people](#). (See [here](#))
- Harvard's programs describe Gaza as occupied even though Gaza has not been occupied since 2005 when [Israel forcibly removed all Israelis living there](#). There was a ceasefire in Gaza on October 6, 2023.
- Israel is the [only democracy](#) in the Middle East, with free elections, an open press, and the protection of minority rights. Certainly, Gaza isn't a democracy. In Gaza, Hamas persecutes minorities, including [women](#) and [Christians](#), and [kills anyone who is LGBTQ](#). As such, Israel is an essential strategic ally and friend to the US and Western democracies.
- Prior to October 7<sup>th</sup>, Israel [employment](#) an estimated 140,000 Palestinians from the Palestinian Territories; Israel also offered [health care](#), [including to the October 7th mastermind](#), which saved his life.